

Euthanizing animals unfair, inhumane

JILL MIERKE
STAFF WRITER

Looking at your dog, you'd probably never guess that somewhere behind those big, blank eyes, his instincts are urging him to jump up and maul you. To you, he isn't a finely tuned killing machine, he's your pet. All you see in him is your dog, wagging his tail happily, as friendly as can be. After all, animals are our friends. We're completely comfortable with them and with our superiority over them. We're the masters, and that will never change.

And when it comes to your pets at home, you probably do have nothing to worry about. However, the number of incidents that include human interference and general stupidity concerning interaction with larger, "tamed" animals are increasingly prevalent, leading to the unfortunate death of humans and even more tragically, the animals.

The stories of animals being killed maliciously after the interference of humans never seem to cease. In Fairplay Colo., 32 bison were shot after wandering from their owners' pastures to a neighboring farm's fields. They were shot dead, for the simple fact that they were roaming (as bison tend to do). In a similar case, an alligator was shot for stepping foot on a residential lawn in Florida.

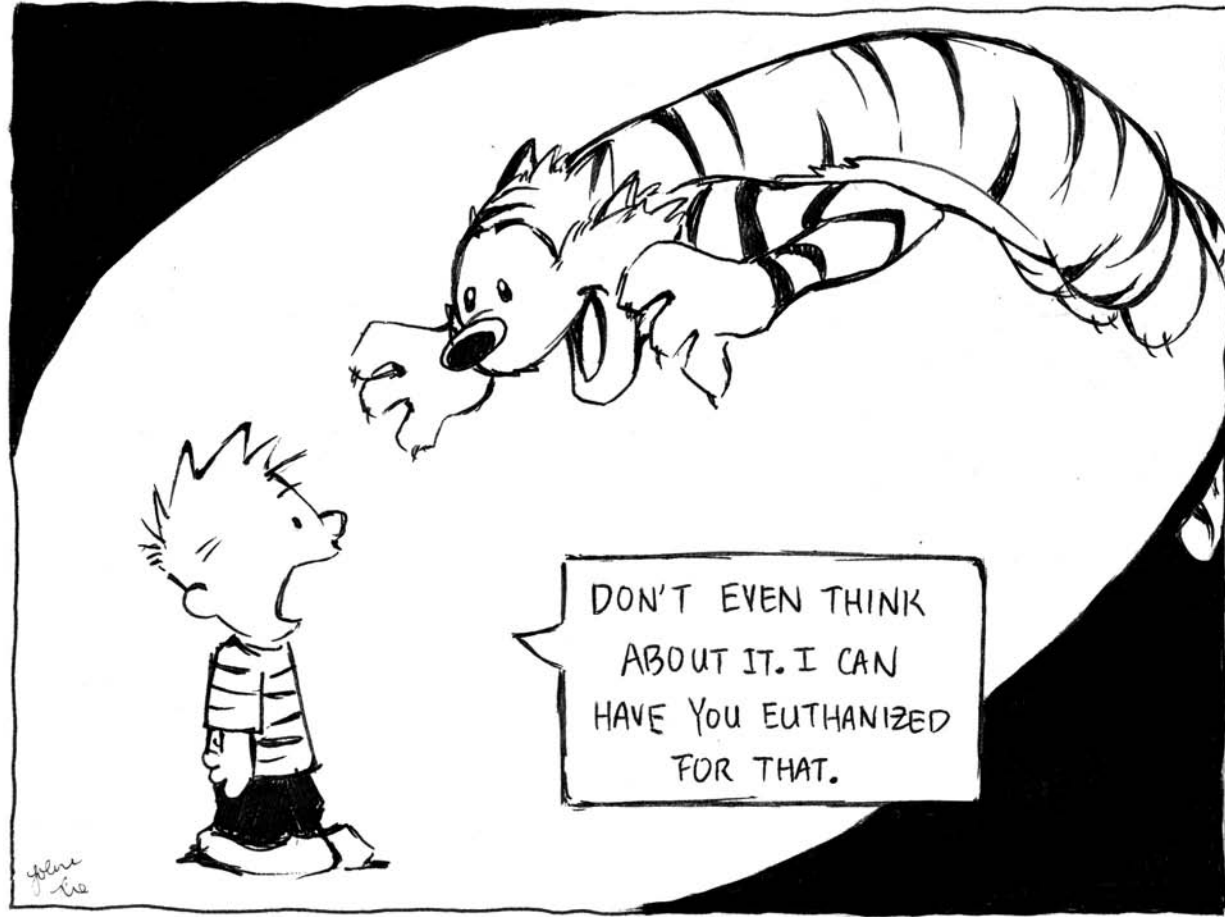
On Christmas Day last year, a 253-pound tiger named Tatiana escaped her cage at a zoo in San Francisco and attacked and killed a man while injuring two others. Tatiana was shot by police later that day.

But the tiger is not the one to blame, as is the case in many other tragic stories. It was later found that the three victims had provoked Tatiana, throwing pinecones and sticks into the enclosure and yelling to taunt the animal. By attacking, Tatiana only obeyed her natural inclination to protect herself. She acted the way that tigers innately do and the fault lies with the three victims for provoking the rage of a wild animal.

Currently, it is estimated that only 8,000 tigers remain in the world, 5,000 of which are in captivity. Unfairly, there is at least one less, due to the sheer stupidity of humans.

In the comedy *Semi-Pro* starring Will Ferrell, Ferrell's character wrestles a bear to promote his basketball team in one scene. Then, two weeks ago, the same bear, a 5-year-old grizzly named Rocky, killed one of the trainers at a private residence north of San Bernardino.

Although it is entirely tragic that a man lost his life, it



isn't at all surprising. No matter how tame Rocky may have seemed — safe enough to be used in movies — he was still a wild animal.

He was a fierce predator, meant to kill, overpower and to live wildly and freely. Though he was raised in captivity, Rocky never stopped being a grizzly bear; he never stopped being a wild animal. Rocky acted only as he was made to act and his life should not be jeopardized for that.

And besides, he's a grizzly bear. What other reason does he need to bite a human? Just because he acted according to his own will and not that of humans does not mean he should be killed for it. Granted, he probably should not return to show business, but there are other alternatives.

Although Rocky could never survive in the wild naturally like he should, there are hundreds of grizzly bear sanctuaries in the United States that could open for Rocky. This is true for Tatiana also, and almost every other animal.

Our laws are completely foreign to them. They don't abide by or understand "murder" or "assault and battery" or "trespassing". They have two motivations: defense and hunger. To try to force our will upon an animal is a something that will never happen.

It may seem snug and cozy to be at the top of the food chain, but the fact is, when provoked, animals will attack us. That being so, it is absolutely ridiculous to destroy an animal after an attack.

Trash pick up students' responsibility

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Westview Students:

For the past three years, I have been shocked and appalled at the amount of trash that remains in the quad following lunch. When discussing this with students, I have always received similar responses: "I throw my trash away" and "It's not mine." And yet, it is someone's. For a school with an overwhelming number of high achieving and intelligent students, I find myself at a loss with the lack of respect that this trash represents. This signifies a lack of respect for the custodians, whose job is *NOT* to pick up after students who are too lazy to throw trash into one of the many trash cans on campus. It signifies a lack of respect for your teachers, fellow students and yourself, all of whom lay claim to Westview as *our* high school. It signifies a lack of respect for Westview as an institution, and in this respect, I ask you to take pause to examine your surroundings. As a Westview student, you are privileged. If you are to visit other schools in just San Diego County, you should notice that Westview's campus is not only more technologically and architecturally advanced, but also just plainly more aesthetically pleasing. And yet, people cannot be bothered to pick up their own trash, so we are flooded with seagulls and ominous black crows. However, this trash has given way to a new problem.

While trash around campus constitutes a lack of respect, the individuals who are choosing to come onto campus after dark and empty trashcans, throw bird seed around, and most recently, damage school property are *disrespecting* this school and all of the people who come here. And, anyone who is proud of the commitments and accomplishments done in Westview's name, shouldn't sit idly by. It is often a tradition to commit a "senior prank," something funny that the senior class can reminisce about in years to come. The faculty and staff, as adults, do remember this tradition from our own high school experiences.

However, it is *not* a funny prank to purposely throw trash around, commit acts of vandalism, or ruin equipment that the school has gotten to support your own learning experience. It's just not funny, and frankly, it's not even creative. (Did you realize that seagulls don't eat birdseed, and that's why it didn't work?) I ask that the select students behind these incidents think for a minute about the dedicated people who come to Westview every morning to open up the school and now have to add to their already overflowing workload the odious task of sweeping up birdseed. I ask you think about the dedicated teachers and staff at Westview who are here long after our "work day" ends at 3:10, trying to make our school a better place for *you*, and how disheartening it can be to work against apathy. As a student who is not behind these acts of a careless and disrespectful minority, I ask you to stand up against the grain, take the road less traveled by, and think about the simple courtesies that cost nothing. The next time you hear a friend talking about doing something disrespectful, step up and tell them that it's not a good idea. The next time you get up after lunch and go on to third period, make sure you've thrown all your trash away, hold your friends accountable for throwing theirs away too, and if there's trash on the ground, pick it up, even if it isn't yours. You should have pride in your school. You go to school here, average six hours a day here. You will graduate from here.

This is the last time in your life where people will actually do things for *your benefit*. (Trust me.) If you don't respect your own school, no one else will.
English Teacher Susan Townsend

Superficial voting undermines poll results

JOLENE XIE
NEWS EDITOR

On top of economic woes, Asia and the U.S. have a new fixation to fight over.

Since last year, when Korean pop idol Rain defeated American comedian Stephen Colbert in *Time* magazine's "World's 100 Most Influential People" on-line poll, Colbert and Rain have been campaigning incessantly to nab the top spot this year.

Despite the aggressive campaigning that included a dance-off challenge, neither Rain nor Colbert received the "Most Influential" title this year, as it went to Wii video game designer Shigeru Miyamoto.

However, after skimming the first couple of names on the list, I noticed one aspect that the top placers all had in common.

They were recognizable and, well, popular.

All of them rake in millions of dollars, one has garnered a Nobel Peace Prize for his environmental work and two are past presidential race candidates.

However, Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, came in a dismal 207th place, not even close to making the top 100.

The idea of having an on-line poll to see whom the public thinks is most influential is not necessarily a bad objective. It has minimal final impact on the 100 people *Time* actually chooses to print. The editors gave neither Rain nor Colbert recognition in the printed magazine, but the Dalai Lama was the first person mentioned in the "Leaders and Revolutionaries" category.

But when it comes to the point that Colbert and Rain stoop to advertise for themselves, it destroys the meaning of a poll that is supposed to reflect the public's opinion.

Both Rain and Colbert are hits in the entertainment world. But in terms of changing the world, North Korean leader Kim Jong II (ranked 101) Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (ranked 116) have much more clout, whether the voters would like to recognize it or not. After all, a potential nuclear war outweighs the latest Wii game.

The *Time* poll is supposed to be about influence. But we still gravitate towards the names and faces we recognize. And the poll is supposed to reflect society's viewpoints.

But perhaps it does. Maybe it shows how American society truly only cares about the big names in lights. Maybe voters rather be entertained than think.

We need to wake up from this narcissistic dream and face the reality that pop stars don't run the world. But as much as we deny it, popularity drives our vote. We find security in these names, simply because they are familiar. Perhaps "popularity" deserves a spot as on the World's Most Influential list. But we cannot let familiarity influence our choice. There is a difference between casting a vote for a congressman or president and something bearing no extreme significance. However, we blurred the distinction between the two.

We cannot afford to be mystified by the connotations of bigger names. We need to remove our blinders and realize that the world involves more than Rain and Colbert's dance-off.

Time's 100 Most Influential People Poll

- #5 Tyra Banks
- #19 Google Creators
- #29 Chris Rock
- #54 High School Musical Cast
- #58 Pope Benedict XVI
- #62 Madonna
- #71 Britney Spears
- #94 Condoleezza Rice

Sidebar by Daniel Edwards
Source: "Your Time 100" from *Time*

Media needs brighter portrayal of world

ANNA MILLS
STAFF WRITER

Scientists have predicted that an earthquake will hit Southern California in the next 30 years. Research shows that it will most likely be at least a seven on the Richter Scale. The media is the major source for information about world affairs. But sometimes the news media can tell the public something without properly considering the content of the news that they are about to share with their viewers.

The news media needs to consider how the public will react to the news. They need to write stories that will cause people to act and not cause people to go into a depressive state.

Recently, on internet and radio news stories, the newscasters have been warning the public about this enormous earthquake that is bound to hit Southern California. But what they have failed to realize is that telling people about a possible dangerous earthquake subconsciously sends them into unnecessary panic, causing them to potentially miss the next sentence of the newscast: "Scientists think that this will happen in the next 30 years."

Thirty years. In 30 years the current high school students will be in their forties, not remembering what they were told years earlier. The media should not be advertising it to their listeners. Why tell the public so early and with such urgency?

The public has a right to know about the world, but the public does not need to worry about the future of unsure events. Most people are not going to remember that the media warned them; the media does not need to scare people today, especially when they are unsure.

Although people could prepare in advance for a natural disaster a 30-year warning seems a bit much. Not only does the media scare the public with its stories but it also fails to point out the positive stories of life in today's negative world.

The front page headline's of articles of the April 28 issue of the *Union-Tribune* read "Health care worries among voters," while the Our Region section headline read "Cost spike raises alarms." Not only are the headlines worrisome but the articles themselves pose the world as a dangerous, expensive, sad, killing zone.

The newspaper is full of sad stories. But the readers look at the front page and become absorbed

in a world of alarm. The article about "Cost spike raises alarms" is about how firefighters have earned nearly one-third of their income on overtime. But, that makes sense. With the wildfires raging all over the county the firefighters should be earning money from fighting fires. After all, it is their job.

The *Union-Tribune* does not need to worry its readers about how firefighters are getting paid overtime. When people work extra hours, that is what tends to happen. However it is not just the newspapers that blow things out of proportion; it is also the magazines. The Feb. 18 and April 21 editions of *Newsweek* discuss why the Democrats "hate" John McCain.

Instead of talking about what John McCain will do if he becomes President of the United States, *Newsweek* discusses why people hate him. People don't need to be hammered with sadness every time they open their choice of news.

There are better things to talk about in our society. The media should not exaggerate stories about future earthquakes or hate. Journalists should pursue happier stories that won't put people into depressive or scared states. That is the last thing our world needs.

Caloric info on menus promotes healthy eating

MADISON YUILL
STAFF WRITER

On May 1, the strictest law of its kind in the U.S. was put into effect in Seattle-King County Health Department. The law requires restaurants with 10 or more national locations to publish nutritional information on their menus. Most businesses protested the law, thinking that it might reduce sales. If anything, it will increase them.

Let's face it: America is on a diet. Throughout the most obese nation in the world, Americans are becoming more diet and health conscious. With the information placed on menus, Americans — especially Americans with high cholesterol or diabetes — can now go to the restaurants they previously avoided.

Now Americans can go into a restaurant and know if what they

are eating is good or bad. Even if the calories prove the food is unhealthy, consumers who could care less can continue to eat their favorite foods while diet-conscious citizens have the option of making a healthy choice. This law is just educating Americans to what they put in their bodies.

One restaurant spokesperson said that the nutritional information ruins the mood of the restaurant. He argued that no one wants to read about fat and sodium when they are celebrating their anniversary.

But doesn't a plate full of saturated fat ruin the mood as well?

If restaurants are so hesitant about placing nutritional information, perhaps they know just how unhealthy their food is.

Previously, restaurants have been able to get away with customers believing that "healthy" choices on

their menus are just that. However, a simple Wonton Chicken Salad at Pick Up Stix has up to 625 calories in it.

With this new regulation, restaurants will have incentive to prepare healthier foods to cater to a new nutritional savvy populace.

In 2007, 140 million Americans ages 20 or older were obese or overweight, according to Americanheart.org. And while businesses aren't forcing the food down the customers' throats the customers should still be allowed to know what they are eating. The Seattle-King County law is a necessary step in encouraging the decline of a very unhealthy nation. It just might encourage restaurants to prepare healthier food. It will also encourage Americans to make better, healthier choices to alter their diet. And maybe begin the decline of obesity rates.

Veggie Tales of Deception

Carl's Jr's Chicken Chipotle Salad

Right up there with the milkshakes and burgers, and not much healthier.

— 880 calories —

Applebee's Asian Chicken Salad

It's on the menu as "low-fat," which it is, but the calories are another story.

— 710 calories —

P.F. Chang's Nico's Favorite Salad

No wonder Nico likes it. Anything with calories like that must be tasty.

— 1230 calories —

Sidebar by Madison Yuill
Source: calorieking.com

Economic woes demand new consumer strategy

ALLISON FINN
EDITOR IN CHIEF

With costs of almost everything on the rise, tightening the belt has become increasingly necessary. A gallon of gas runs at around \$4 — still comparable to a cup of Starbucks coffee. Food prices are up; the cost of rice, for example, increased by 50 percent in a two-week period at the beginning of April alone. And as those costs increase, the value of real estate has plummeted.

Here in teenage suburbia, that doesn't seem to make a huge impact. Perhaps it's more expensive to fill up the tank of the shiny SUV. Maybe the threats of college tuition increases have sparked a nagging sense of panic. But overall, we continue our daily lives, spending and spending and spending.

It's easier to conform and feed the hungry societal monster of materialism. So we hold our credit cards close, shut our eyes and hope that if we ignore the economy, it will ignore us right back.

But we have another option. We can face the monster head on.

In 2006, a group of about 50 San Francisco professionals made a vow — a Mayflower-esque promise known as the Compact — to not purchase anything new for a year.

In an effort to fight American consumerism and the environmental crisis, they resolved to reduce their personal imprint as consumers, resorting to secondhand purchases and simple, good-old-elementary-school-fashioned sharing. Exceptions were made in the areas of health, basic safety, food and — of course — underwear.

While the Compacters' methods may be a tad extreme, the message resonated among a number of ex-consumers; the movement has expanded far beyond the original group. With the current economic situation, 53.6 percent of buyers concentrate on what they needed rather than merely wanted over the last

six months, according to BIGresearch. For teenagers not only do they face the costs of college, but also the inevitably increasing price of living, the ideas of the Compact aren't too far of the mark.

Aside from saving up for a car or Guitar Hero, teenagers have few major destinations for our hard-earned (or begged) cash — no healthcare, mortgages or electric bills to pay.

Traditionally, this is supposed to change when we go off to college, when we "grow up" and take responsibility for our lives. But in today's world with today's economy, we can't afford that luxury — literally.

Now is the time to implement the principles of the Compact into daily life. Adolescence allows the privilege of reinvention, especially for those about to head off to college. As teenagers, we have just enough responsibility and just few enough consequences to make it work.

Our world is rapidly changing and it is foolish to expect the current standard of living to stay the same. We now have the opportunity to develop habits that will sustain ourselves and our families, and make a significant social imprint on our culture and economy.

The cult of consumerism cannot be sustained without dire consequences for both individuals and the general economy.

In the first three months of 2008, almost a quarter-million Americans lost their jobs, bumping the unemployment rate up to 5.1 percent, the highest since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This is only the beginning.

However, it is not enough to blame the government or big business for our problems. Instead, we can make basic lifestyle choices that encourage lower levels of spending for both our community and ourselves. And while the Compact may seem somewhat radical, implementing its principles just might pay off.